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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABIDJAN 000521

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SUBJECT: LACK OF FUNDING HAMPERS DDR PROCESS

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Classified By: EconChief EMassinga, Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Senior military officers from the Forces Nouvelles (FAFN) confirmed to Emboffs during a recent trip to Bouake and Seguela that substantial progress is being made in regrouping FAFN troops but funding to ensure the smooth reintegration of former combatants is lacking. FAFN leaders leveled implicit criticism at the Ivorian government for failing to provide the resources to pay demobilization benefits, conduct the civic service campaign or mount a genuine youth reinsertion program. FAFN leaders also criticized the failure to settle issues relating to the structure of a new army. Emboffs visited a regroupment site and saw firsthand troops being demobilized. End Summary.

¶2. (C) During a July 15-18 trip by Emboffs to Forces Nouvelles controlled Bouake and Seguela, senior FN officials and local United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) representatives said that the process of Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) is proceeding. UNOCI reported that some 4850 FAFN men have been formally demobilized, and their arms cantoned (but under FAFN control). Of the 4850, UNOCI reported that a mere 37 have been reintegrated into society with the help of the government's National Plan for Community Reinsertion and Rehabilitation (PNRRC is the French acronym); 450 have been "referred" to the government's Civic Service program; and more than 3830 have been simply discharged and left to fend for themselves as best they can.

GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS FLOUNDERING

¶3. (C) The PNRRC program is intended to help former combatants who already possess basic skills to find jobs, and is supposed to give soldiers transition assistance in the form of three monthly payments of CFA 90,000 each, equaling a total of USD 652. Emboffs met with the Bouake representative of the PNRRC who confirmed that his organization had zero funding from the GoCI and did not know when they might receive funding. (Note: The PNRRC has long been the subject of bitter controversy between the World Bank and the Prime Minister's office due to the latter's insistence on appointing a close associate, whom the Bank opposed, to head the organization. The government had planned to finance the PNRRC as part of a World Bank USD 120million Post Crisis Action Plan (PCAP) but was never able to reach agreement with the Bank on how the PNRRC should operate.) While the government and the World Bank have apparently come to agreement on international funding of a new Ivorian agency to administer spending of the Bank's USD 120 million PCAP program, the PNRRC appears to have been left fiscally bereft, but remains nominally responsible for assisting ex-combatants and distributing payments to them. The Civic Service program appears to be equally insolvent. UNOCI and Forces Nouvelles observers on the ground said they have seen no government programming; the only civic service-related activity underway is a GTZ (the

German development agency) effort in Bouake. Seguela-based observers (UNOCI, the Prefect's office) indicate that neither the PNRRC nor the civic service program is yet installed there.

14. (C) UNOCI political and demobilization officers in Bouake and Seguela openly worried about the possibility of heading to elections without more tangible gains in disarmament. Arms collections, according to UNOCI figures, are laughable; fewer than 100 weapons have been collected in FAFN demobilizations thus far and most are decrepit and unserviceable.

FORCES NOUVELLES PLANS AND CONCERNS

15. (C) The head of the FAFN, Gen. Bakayoko, told Emboffs that the regroupment and DDR process will facilitate enhanced security throughout Forces Nouvelles territory. He said the FAFN plans to conduct the regroupment in four phases corresponding to different regions. The first phase is taking place in the Seguela/Bouake region; regroupment was scheduled to last until July 29. Gen. Bakayoko told Emboffs that the first regroupment yielded more than 2500 soldiers. (Note: discrepancies between Bakayoko's figures and UNOCI's figures were not discussed.) The second phase is scheduled to take place in Katiola/Mankono, the third Man/Touba/Odienne, and the fourth Korhogo/Bouna/Boundiali. Bakayoko said that one of the FAFN's goal as it conducts the regroupment exercise is to identify 5000 soldiers to transition into a new, unified army; 4000 to go into the combined national gendarmerie and police force; and an additional 1000 to go into the various

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national forestry and customs services. Bakayoko reminded Emboffs that while there is tacit agreement between the FANCI and the FAFN on these numbers, formal approval of the scheme has not yet been given. The plan has been presented to OPA Facilitator Compaore but a response is pending. Even if approved, the concept will leave more than 26,000 men to be somehow reinserted into society, a daunting number even if reinsertion programs were working well.

16. (C) Gen. Bakayoko said reintegration with the FANCI is a critical issue; many FAFN troops are counting on being accepted into the new army. Bakayoko said the question of officer ranks, i.e., whether Forces Nouvelles officers will be allowed to retain the ranks they have attained during the rebellion, is still unresolved and generates anxiety among FAFN officers. He commented that President Compaore has apparently given his opinion on the subject to Gbagbo and Soro, but the two have not yet reached an agreement. Bakayoko also complained that salary arrears for Forces Nouvelles personnel who were members of the FANCI before the rebellion have also not been regulated although this should have been done in April 2007. He linked resolution of the ranks issue with disarmament saying that the FAFN is prepared to see some of its officers lose their current rank in the spirit of compromise, but that a failure to make progress overall would substantially retard the DDR effort because there must be a solid, unified officer corps to make a new unified army effective.

ELECTION SECURITY

17. (C) Bakayoko told Emboffs that elections security is the next big challenge. UNOCI, according to the FAFN Chief of Staff, should be the public face of the enterprise, with FANCI and FAFN troops playing a supporting, background role. He said the integrated command structure (CCI), which is not yet functioning smoothly, should be the executor, concentrating on flashpoints of ethnic tensions, both in the FN and government zones. (Note: Bakayoko indicated there is good collaboration within CCI, even if the question of officer ranks prevents full, formal cooperation.) He

indicated that he is developing a schema to address the "hot spots" and remarked that Odienne was a hot spot even before the war. He asserted that there are more dangerous areas in the south than in the north, naming Gagnoa (President Gbagbo's home town), Soubre and Sassandra as particularly perilous. Militia dismantlement in the west would be the next crucial step, and Bakayoko was critical in his comments that nothing is being done on that front. He also said that the FN would like mixed brigades to provide security for the elections, as was done for the audiences foraines.

18. (C) Comment. The FN appears to be taking the process of regroupment and demobilization seriously, despite the lack of resources being provided for the process. It is not clear, however, that they will be able to continue to do so unless more funding materializes, or what the ramifications will be of discharging large numbers of young men into the population with no assistance.

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